

Northern Territory Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program

**Independent Review of Program Outcomes
Report**

RFQ Number: Q19-0546

For the NT Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
Prepared by Ninti One
Andy Bubb and Tammy Abbott



NINTI ONE LIMITED

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material. Ninti One sincerely apologises for any distress, sadness and/or offence this may cause.



NINTI ONE LIMITED

Ninti One is an Aboriginal not-for-profit organisation, led by Chair, Professor Tom Calma AO. Its reason for existence is to build opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people living in remote Australia, through research, innovation, and engagement.

www.nintione.com.au

Disclaimer

As a review, this document reflects the views of the evaluators and does not necessarily represent the views of the Northern Territory Government or Ninti One, nor bind them to action.

Photographs in this document were provided by Northern Territory government, or commercially sourced. The findings of the review are independent of the individuals and organisations depicted in the photographs.





Contents

Overview	1
NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program	1
Review Findings	2
Key Findings and Recommendations	3
Policy	3
Governance	3
Administration	3
Benefits	4
Sustainability	4
Introduction	5
Review Methodology	8
Agreement and Reporting Reviews	8
Semi-structured Interviews	10
Governance	11
Program Design	11
Program Structure	11
Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG)	12
Reviewers Assessment of ALMAG	12
Expert Review Group	14
Reviewers Assessment of Expert Review Group	14
Guidelines	15
Guideline Description	15
Reviewers Assessment of Guidelines	16
Stakeholder Feedback on Guidelines	16
Application Process	17
Application Description	17
Reviewers Assessment of Applications Process	17
Stakeholder Feedback on Application Process	18
Assessment Process	19
Reviewers findings on Assessment Process	19
Stakeholder Feedback on Assessment Process	20
Contracting and Reporting	21
Reviewers findings on Contracting and Reporting	21
Stakeholder Feedback on Contracting and Reporting	22
Projects and Funding	23
Capital Grants	25
Project Funding	26
Reviewers findings on Projects and Funding	27
Stakeholder Feedback on Projects and Funding	28
Evaluative Judgement of Program	30
Attachment 1	31

Overview

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has distributed \$11.4m since it was established in 2017 to Aboriginal Ranger groups and organisations. The grants have been made for both the purchase of capital items (Capital Funding) and for the funding of project activities (Land Management and Conservation Fund) conducted by the Ranger groups. While a diverse range of items and programs have been funded the key outcome sought has been improved land management across the Northern Territory.

In February 2020 the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security initiated an independent review of the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. The central evaluation question was:

‘Have real land management outcomes been achieved?’

During October to December 2020 Ninti One reviewed the funding guidelines, applications and reports provided by Aboriginal Ranger groups related to the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. In addition, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with around 40 stakeholders in the program to seek their views on its effectiveness and the outcomes achieved.

NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program

The review has found that the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has made a considerable and profound contribution to land management across the Northern Territory. This has been achieved through the very focussed provision of resources and project funding to Aboriginal Ranger groups that has allowed for ongoing benefit beyond the program. The land management outcomes and financial benefit achieved has been substantial.

Through the 4-year program the Northern Territory Government allowed established Aboriginal Ranger groups to apply for funding for capital items (up to \$100,000) or project funding (up to \$500,000 across 3 years). During rounds 1 and 2 of the program 58 Capital grants were made distributing \$4.05m (average \$156,427 and median \$100,090). During rounds 1 to 4 of the program 47 project grants made distributing \$7.35m (average \$69,944 and median \$77,273).

Grants made to groups for capital items provided the resources for carrying out direct land or sea management activities. More than 75% of the successful Aboriginal Ranger groups used capital grants to purchase 4WD vehicles, ATV (All Terrain Vehicles) and spray equipment that provided access to country and the necessary equipment for land management activities. This included monitoring, mapping, weed control, feral animal removal and fire mitigation planning.

The project grants made through the program funded diverse and varied activities. Direct land management activities included fire, weed and feral animal management planning. Projects focussed on wildlife management and awareness were also funded along with cultural management activities. These activities were the key focus of over 75% of the projects funded.

Other activities funded through the project stream included training, enterprise development and identifying philanthropic processes that can sustain Aboriginal ranger work independent of Northern Territory Government funding.

The governance of the program is centred around transparent processes and meaningful consultation with stakeholders. The administration of the program has been efficient and reported as less than 6% of the entire budget. Stakeholders were consistent in their praise of the program and the Departmental staff who they were regularly interacting with. Practical experience and accessibility were consistently mentioned.

Mechanisms for receiving expert input to reviewing individual applications have been created and refined throughout the life of the program. The Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG) has had input into all funding recommendations provided to the Department. The practical and contextual experience of this group has strengthened the program and was praised by stakeholders.

Review Findings

Information provided by the stakeholders during consultations demonstrated that the projects and resources that were funded through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program had increased the capacity of groups and had an enduring value.

Multiple examples of the equipment or projects funded through the NT Aboriginal Grant Program being used for Fee for Service work or to attract ongoing, external funding were identified during the review. Stakeholders were able to link this to increased employment opportunities for rangers and highlighted the contribution this could make to the sustainability of ranger groups. Examples included:

- A grant of less than \$40,000 allowed ranger group to undertake a study that acted as a pre-cursor to establishing an Indigenous Protected Area. This will attract ongoing federal funding of \$350,000-\$400,000 annually.
- The purchase of a vehicle and additional spray equipment allowed a ranger group to meet the necessary conditions of an external tender process and were successful in winning a contract. An initial contract for \$120,000 worth of work has now grown to over \$200,000 per annum.
- A ranger group that purchased scientific monitoring equipment (<\$20,000) and provided training in its use has now been able to partner with Universities and external agencies to provide data on a fee for service basis. This generates an income for the ranger group and a saving in time and expense for the research organisations. It has also allowed the ranger organisation to have meaningful input into the focus and direction of research.
- The purchase of a boat has allowed a ranger group to sign multi-year contracts marine monitoring activities. In addition to generating an income this has also provided a regular training opportunity for rangers to develop their maritime skills and formal qualifications that have led to external employment opportunities for some Aboriginal Rangers.

The projects and resources were also identified as strong influencers on Ranger employment and ongoing engagement in land and sea management. Rangers described that they were proud of their assets including boats and vehicles and are now in a position to lead work and programs on their country. Rangers contrasted the equipment they now owned with older equipment that continually needed repair interrupting or stopping their capacity to complete land management activities.

The review has found that the application, assessment, contracting and reporting processes have been appropriate for levels of funding provided and have not been identified as barrier by stakeholders. Grant recipients have reported on the outputs achieved using the funding and the overall contribution that this has made to land management across the Northern Territory.

This report provides the findings of the evaluation along with key recommendations for strengthening the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program into the future.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The following recommendations have been provided based on the findings of the review.

The recommendations have been formed following the review of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant guidelines, applications and reports. The information collected through stakeholder interviews was also considered.

The key findings and recommendations are provided under following themes:

- Policy
- Governance
- Administration
- Benefits
- Sustainability.

Policy

- 1. The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has successfully delivered capital and project funding and no major changes to the program should occur if future objectives remain the same.**

The review has found the program to be achieving the identified aims in a timely and efficient way. Stakeholders expressed strong support for the program and clearly articulated the land management benefits they had been able to deliver using the resources provided.

- 2. Scaling up the program through increased funding (20%-80%) could be achieved while maintaining the current structures and processes.**

The governance and administrative structures for the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program are well-designed, comprehensive and efficient. Few, if any changes would be needed to the current governance arrangements to administer and deliver increased funding. The ongoing automation using online portals for applications and reporting will continue to increase this efficiency.

- 3. The broad guidelines are beneficial and have allowed for investments in innovation. The proactive approach of Departmental staff in discussing potential applications with ranger groups prior to submission should be maintained.**

The transparent and accessible approach adopted by the department allowed groups to focus their efforts and not expend time and resources on applications that had no chance of receiving funding. The strong governance arrangements including three levels of review before approval ensured the integrity of the assessment process.

Governance

- 4. The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program should consider focussed funding rounds for activities that have been shown to produce high economic and environmental returns and provide the anticipated schedule to groups in advance (12-24 months).**

Funding may be focussed around themes and could also be used to encourage broader, landscape scale collaborative projects. Activities that establish a foundation for future non-Northern Territory Government funding may also represent a good opportunity for growing the total investment that is being made into NT Aboriginal Ranger Groups.

Administration

- 5. Aligning reporting frameworks to the financial year would potentially streamline administrative functions.**

NT Ranger groups that use external financial services identified increased cost in administration and anticipate there would be savings if reporting was consistent with the financial year.

- 6. The type of reporting that is required for projects could be increasingly varied based on scale and scope of funding provided. The purchase of capital items could require reduced reporting compared with the project work.**

Increased use of geo-referenced photographs could also reduce the administrative load on ranger groups in reporting the work or outcomes achieved utilising the grant funding.

Benefits

- 7. The investments made have produced significant social and community benefits. Wellbeing metrics could be included as an outcome for the program and included within the funding guidelines.**

While still an emerging area of evaluation there are now established frameworks that can assess the contribution of programs to culture, empowerment and community. Utilising these frameworks or developing a new methodology would help to capture the program benefits.

- 8. Sharing of information about the success of the ranger program grants between groups could increase the wellbeing outcomes that are reported.**

It was found that many groups hadn't taken into account all of the benefits that had been realised as a result of the grant they had received. Facilitating peer-to-peer knowledge sharing could help groups to realise more of the successes they have achieved and to identify new opportunities.

Sustainability

- 9. The opportunity for groups to provide fee for service activities and training to other organisations should be explored (ranger to ranger exchange).**

The capacity and experience of the rangers and their desire to understand what other groups are doing was expressed during the review. The opportunity for groups to build this into training packages that can be offered to other groups exists. The development of delivery of these types of activities could be potentially funded through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program.

- 10. Collecting data about gender/age profile could further identify gaps in ranger groups for use within the program and more broadly by Northern Territory Government.**

The additional information may also help to better inform the NT Ranger Grant Program about the impact of the funding and the utilisation by different cohorts across ranger teams.

- 11. The significant list of successful and unsuccessful projects is a resource for future activities. This could be mined for opportunities and also tested against Northern Territory land management future aims and plans.**

Summaries of the projects, aims, outputs and outcomes could be utilised by ranger groups to identify potential projects. This could help to overcome the loss of 'corporate or landscape' knowledge that occurs with staff turnover within Ranger groups and could be especially helpful in small and remote organisations.

- 12. The successes of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program could be more widely reported and highlighted within Government and to the community to help the ongoing sustainability and support of the program.**

Broader awareness of the program through detailing the successes and the multiple community, cultural and environmental outcomes could be achieved through case studies, feature stories and social media posting. Recognition for the Rangers and the value of their work to the Northern Territory would also be positive.

Introduction

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program was established in 2017 as a component of the NT Government Protecting Country, Creating Jobs initiative. The initiative was developed to support Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers to protect the environment on Aboriginal lands and seas, as well as leverage economic opportunities and enhance community wellbeing. The program guidelines describe the following aims:

The program helps to ensure rangers have the equipment, infrastructure and operational capacity they need to 'work on country' and achieve meaningful conservation, economic and social outcomes.

The guidelines also described the resourcing of the program with two funding streams identified:

Protecting Country, Creating Jobs included a capital grants program for Aboriginal Ranger groups to help purchase essential items, with funding of up to \$4.1 million over two years in 2017-18 and 2018-19; and the establishment of a Land Management and Conservation Fund to improve conservation practices on Aboriginal land, with funding of up to \$2 million per annum over four years from 2017-18.

Nationally there are 127 Aboriginal Ranger groups receiving \$102 million in Australian Government funding, with 37 of these groups located in the Northern Territory. The program design also recognised the other funding sources that Northern Territory Aboriginal Ranger groups rely on, with the guidelines stating:

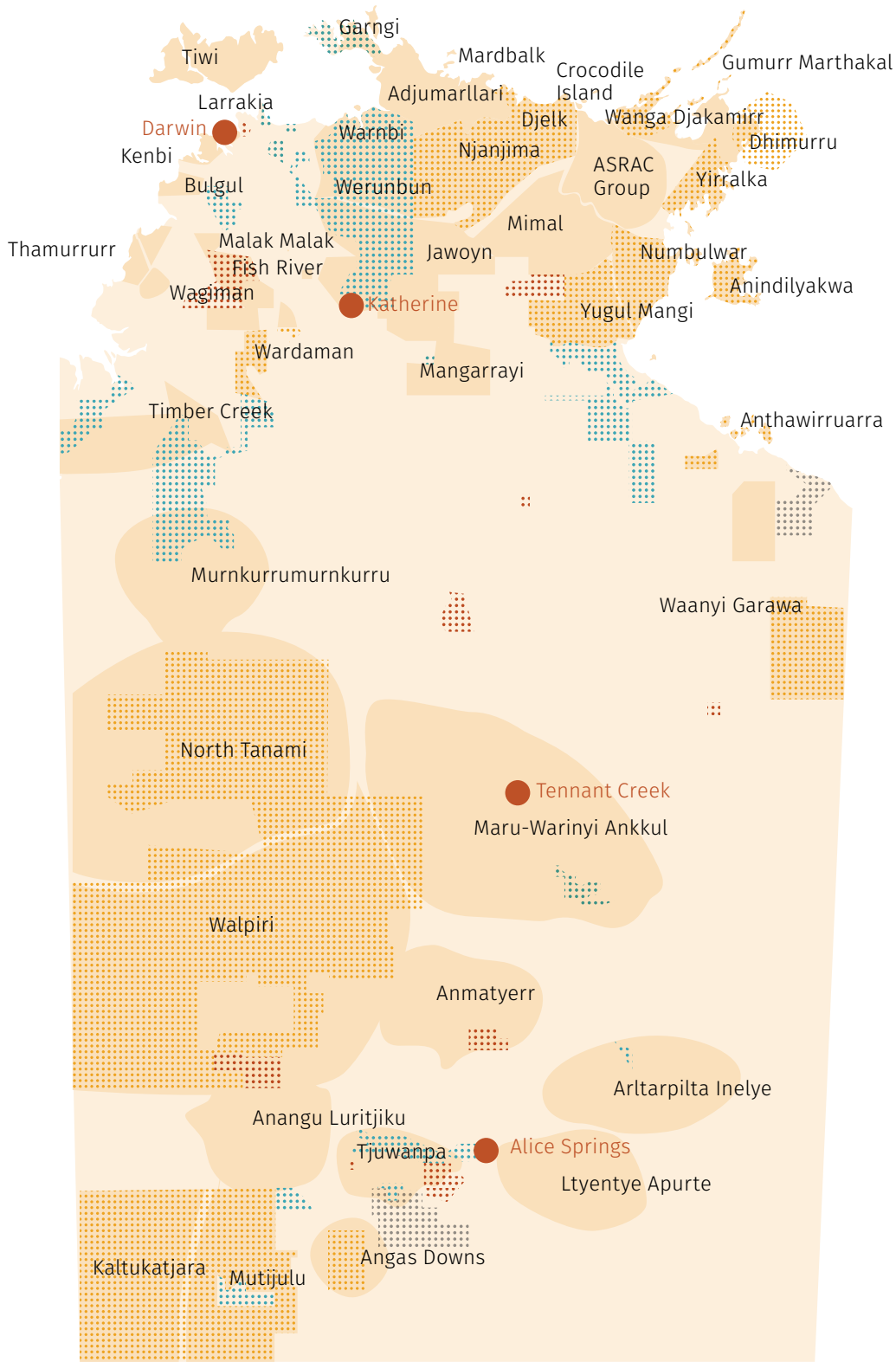
The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program is not intended to replace existing support and funding for rangers – such as the Australian Government's Working on Country program - rather it complements such programs to increase capacity and capability and encourage innovation.

A comprehensive governance framework was established for the program that consulted widely with stakeholders and navigated a clear path through perceived and real conflicts of interest. The volunteer Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG) was central to providing feedback on the program aims, guidelines and assessment processes. ALMAG members were also able to provide practical, real world advice to the Department based on their connections to Aboriginal land management organisations and ranger programs.

Through the 4-year program the Northern Territory Government invested \$12.1 million and allowed established Aboriginal Ranger groups across the Northern Territory to apply for funding for capital items (up to \$100,000) or project funding (up to \$500,000 across 3 years). A total of 193 applications were made by the 46 eligible ranger groups and sought a total of \$20.5 million.

This report describes the findings of the independent review of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program undertaken by Ninti One in October-December 2020. The findings are based on the information and data gathered through reviewing the program policies, guidelines and reports. In addition, over 40 stakeholders participated in semi-structured interviews to describe their experiences of the program.

The consistent signal from the data and message from the stakeholders was that the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has been successful in achieving its aims. The benefits of the program were demonstrated across land management, employment, community and cultural engagement.



Key

- Indigenous Protected Area
- National Park
- Other Conservation Area
- Private Conservation

Figure 1: Map showing the 46 Ranger Groups within the Northern Territory eligible to apply for and receive an NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant.



Review Methodology

A mixed-methods participatory evaluation methodology was utilised to review the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. This methodology was selected to deal with the wide variation in the experiences of Aboriginal Ranger organisations with the program. The data used within this review is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Type of data and considerations.

Type of Data	Source	Potential Bias and Considerations
Documentary	Northern Territory Government policies; Program guidelines; Terms of Reference; Program applications; reports; meeting minutes, program correspondence and promotional materials including videos.	Policies and guidelines developed at the beginning of program and modified as required. Variation in capacity between organisations preparing applications and submitting reports. Diversity of projects/capital items funded and the variation in subsequent reporting.
Quantitative	Program reporting including progress and final reports; financial summaries; meeting minutes.	Outputs and outcomes are self-reported and unaudited. Some projects were not completed at time of review.
Qualitative	Opinions, experiences and views of stakeholders of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program.	Stakeholders involvement with the program varied in level of influence, duration and participation. Perspectives from grantees varied with some larger organisations receiving multiple grants while others only received single grants.

Agreement and Reporting Reviews

The methodology required the independent reviewers to understand the program by examining documents provided by the Department relating to the program including policies, guidelines, applications, assessments and project reports. The minutes of meetings and correspondence between the Department and Ranger organisations were also reviewed. The funding agreements and reports were reviewed to assess:

- The suitability of funding agreements, the efficiency of execution and the timeliness of their delivery
- The completeness of reporting against the funding agreements, the percentage of all key outputs and outcomes reported/achieved against the identified intent of the ranger grants program
- The unintended or additional benefits that organisations achieved through the funding received.



Semi-structured Interviews

The experiences of stakeholders were captured through semi-structured face-to-face interviews that discussed all aspects of the program. A plain language description of the review and a consent form was provided to interviewees prior to the interview (Attachment 1). Interviews were also conducted with stakeholders that had not received grants. This included representatives of the Northern Territory Government and Northern Territory based Land Management organisations.

The organisations that were invited to participate in the semi-structured interviews were selected using a framework which considered:

Size of organisation

How long has the organisation existed? How many staff in total and other work outside of the ranger program? How extensive is the governance and administration structures of the organisation and what support do they provide to the ranger program?

Time that ranger program has been established and size

How long has the ranger program existed and been operational and how many participants? Is it embedded within the community or still creating linkages? Has the coordination of the program been stable?

Gender diversity

Does the organisation have both women and men ranger programs? How long have they been established and is there collaboration and sharing of resources between the programs?

Geographic location

Where is the program based? Does remoteness classification influence how grant funding is accessed and used?

Interviewees were able to respond anonymously to the questions and were interviewed at their workplace independent of the Northern Territory Government. The duration of interviews conducted ranged from 40 minutes up to 90 minutes with the interviewers taking hard copy notes. No interviews were digitally recorded.

The questions asked during the interviews varied widely and were determined by the experiences of the interviewee, the length of time they had been employed within the organisation and their involvement with the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. While all organisations that were consulted with during this review had received funding through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program not all interviewees had been involved in reviewing guidelines, submitting applications, participating in project work or submitting project reports.

Interviews were structured around the following themes:

- **Introduction of reviewers**, description of review process and findings at that point in time. This involved the reviewers describing the general views that had been described by other interviewees. The projects and funding provided under the program to the organisation was also confirmed during the introduction.
- **Understanding the experience of the interviewees** with the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program including the time they'd been involved with the organisation and the components of the program they had interacted with.
- **Program components** were discussed based on the experiences of the interviewee. Discussions about the suitability, appropriateness and effectiveness of the guidelines, application form/portal, progress reporting and final reporting were undertaken. The programs governance and the assessment framework for applications were also discussed.
- **Outcomes achieved** that benefited the Ranger organisation and contributed to better Land Management were discussed. This also captured any broader benefits of the projects or capital items funded through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. Interviewees were also provided with the reviewers contact details in case they wanted to submit additional information after the interview.

The interview responses were analysed using a coding frame qualitative content analysis. This process grouped responses to the evaluation questions and identified common themes and points of difference between interviewees. Direct quotes that exemplified this were also identified during this process for inclusion in the final report.

Governance

Program Design

The Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program was developed within the Northern Territory and has recognized the unique relationships and operational parameters of having small ranger teams dispersed across huge geographical areas. The Northern Territory's relatively low population means that within the Aboriginal land management sector there are many established relationships between stakeholders, Aboriginal landowners, government agency staff and service providers.

Program Structure

This complex web of relationships was recognized within the program design and dealt with through a comprehensive and transparent governance structure. The project governance was structured around regular and meaningful consultation with stakeholders from across the sector. A combination of expert advice, transparent project assessment and an engaged government executive created a high degree of trust in the process.

Placing the administration of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program within an agency with practical environmental research and land management experience was beneficial for the program design and operation. The tacit knowledge held within the department influenced many areas of the program design, application and reporting processes. The agency also had strong, trusted and respectful relationships across the land management sector of the NT.

The practical experience of the program administrators contributed to the efficiency of the project structure, application and approval processes. By understanding the locations and conditions that ranger groups the program administrators were able to provide the appropriate guidance about the minimum information required in applications. This proved a significant contributor to the success of the program as it reduced the overall workload on ranger groups making funding applications which likely lifted the total number of applications made.

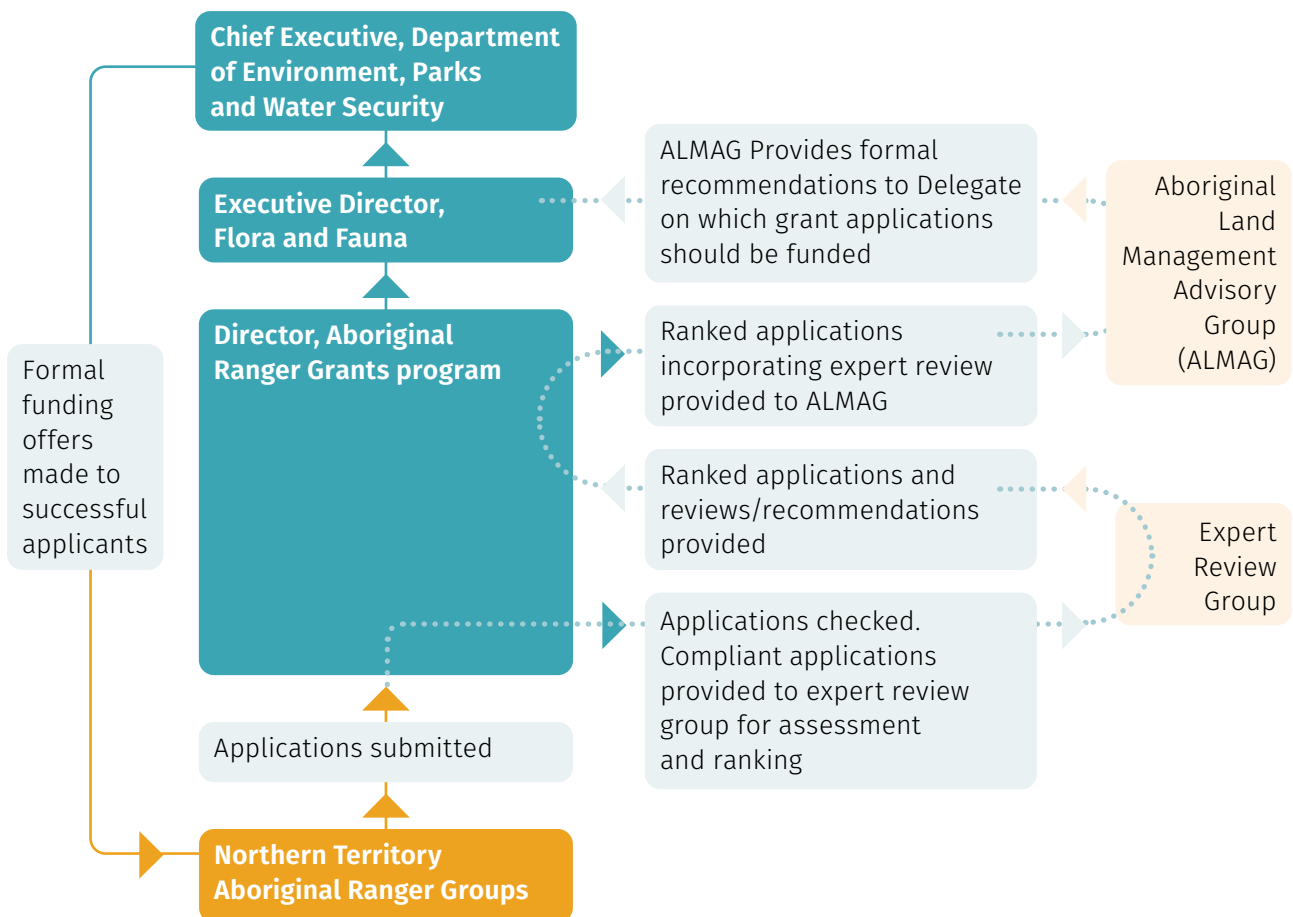


Figure 2: Project structure and application assessment and approval process.

Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG)

The Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG) was established at the beginning of the program to *'guide the development and effective implementation of the policy initiative protecting country, creating jobs*. A detailed Terms of Reference describes the rationale for the ALMAG, the membership and the role of members.

Included within the membership are representatives of Northern Territory Land Councils, North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA), Territory Natural Resource Management, Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation and the Northern Territory Government. In addition, the Terms of Reference state that there must be 2 representatives from the Southern NT and 3 from the Northern NT as well as an independent member.

The role of members is focussed on providing advice and perspective to the Department about the program and ensure that it is targeted and appropriate for NT Aboriginal Ranger groups. The ALMAG was responsible for ensuring that the application process, grant management system and reporting requirements matched the operational capacity of Aboriginal Ranger Groups. In addition, ALMAG members are to *'Provide advice and recommendations to the Northern Territory Government (NT Government) departments on all relevant aspects of Aboriginal Land & Sea Management and its benefit and relevance to the overall wellbeing of Aboriginal people.'*

As most members of ALMAG are associated with Northern Territory Aboriginal Ranger groups, managing members real and perceived conflicts of interest was important for the integrity of the program. Members completed a *Declaration of Interests and Confidentiality (Non-NT Government Employees)* form to identify any real or perceived issues. When ALMAG members were potentially linked to a grant application being considered this was stated within the meeting. In most instances the member would still participate in the discussion of the grant application to provide insight but would not vote in the final recommendation.

Between 2018 and 2020 the ALMAG held 10 meetings. These meetings were predominantly face to face and often had full day agendas. The Department provided secretariat support to the ALMAG with agendas and papers provided to members in advance. This included the ranked funding applications and assessments.

Reviewers Assessment of ALMAG

The ALMAG is a critical component of the program and has provided the Department with invaluable perspective and support in providing resources to NT Aboriginal Ranger Groups. While the ALMAG establishment, meetings and processes require significant resources provided by the NT Government and the members organisations, especially in the establishment phase it operates effectively and efficiently.

The transparency of the ALMAG and the discussions of the program has given confidence to both members and the Aboriginal Ranger Groups across the Northern Territory receiving funding. While the membership of the ALMAG represents organisations, who are effectively competing for the available grants this was not observed to impact on the functioning of the group.

Members described the cooperative way that the ALMAG worked through issues and applications to *'achieve the best outcome for the NT'*. The ALMAG was also identified by members as a *'good chance to link up with other people in the sector to hear about what they are up to'*.

While the potential for the ALMAG to become a statutory body was mentioned during stakeholder consultations most people concluded that this would likely negatively impact the effectiveness of the group in getting their opinions and recommendations across to the Department.

The relationship between the members of ALMAG and the Department was described as *'working really well'*. The ALMAG members consulted felt that the Department listened to its opinions, concerns and recommendations and were unable to recall any instances where advice provided was ignored or rejected.



Expert Review Group

The Expert Review Group had 3-6 members who would independently assess and rank the applications received. The individuals who participated were selected on their experience and knowledge of the topics covered within the grant applications. This created an assessment panel that had both subject specialists and generalist practitioners in natural resource management.

The Expert Review Group utilised a quantitative framework for assessing applications that provided a ranking of applications. A process for the Expert Review Group to also identify projects that had innovative potential and novel ideas was also established and is further described in the latter section, Assessment Process. The consistency, transparency and rigour around the assessment process undertaken by the Expert Review Group was identified as a critical process by the Departmental staff and ALMAG members responsible for making funding decisions.

Reviewers Assessment of Expert Review Group

The Expert Review Group was cited by stakeholders as a critical assessment process that filtered out applications that were unlikely to achieve their stated outcomes. By involving multiple people within this process, the NT Aboriginal Grant Program was able to have broad input and reduce the potential bias that may come from having only a narrow, non-specialist group of reviewers.

The Expert Review Group processes required a significant amount of time to read, review and rank all 193 applications that were received over the 4-year program. As a result, the ALMAG and Department were presented with a high standard of applications with transparent assessments, ranking and recommendations. This has contributed significantly to the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire program.

Stakeholder Feedback on Governance

Governance structure – This one is different. It seems to have more meaning – this one is listened to. If the same structure stayed, I wouldn't have a problem.

This program, they've kind of taken their hands off it a bit, less controlling and it's worked very well.

Without the program, less people and just reduced amounts of work.

Guidelines

Guideline Description

The guidelines for the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program were publicly available for download from the Northern Territory Government website (former Department of Environment and Natural Resources). The guidelines described the background to the program including the two funding streams available, the capital funding round and the Land Management and Conservation Fund.

The Land Management and Conservation Fund called for projects and activities that aligned to one or more of the following themes:

- On-ground activities
- Investment in people
- Growing the sector
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Planning
- Innovation.

The Guidelines described the eligibility criteria for applicants and the clear need for outcomes to be linked to land/sea management and conservation objectives. The guidelines also explicitly state that *'Land/Sea management objectives may include cultural and social outcomes, in addition to environmental outcomes'*.

The guidelines were highly contextualised to the Northern Territory and anticipated the varying capacities of Ranger Groups to make applications. An example of this is found under section 2.3 Multiple Applications which states *'Ranger groups and eligible organisations may submit multiple applications. Applicants should be mindful that the assessment process will include a principle of "fairness" that will consider geographic spread and the variation in ranger group's current capacity, in distributing the total funding allocation.'*

The guidelines described the programs that were eligible to be funded as:

- On-Ground activities (weed, feral and fire management; other environmental and ecological management, and cultural management).
- Investment in people (training and skill development in the use of equipment and technology; training and skill development in compliance and enforcement of relevant legislation; maintenance of Aboriginal ecological knowledge and management practices, and; development of governance structures and training).
- Growing the Sector (Development of fee-for-service activities; development of carbon pollution abatement projects; development of research and monitoring projects).
- Monitoring and evaluation (Developing monitoring and evaluation techniques).
- Planning (Development of plans of management for areas of Aboriginal land and sea).
- Innovation (projects/programs that involve new and innovative approaches to land and sea management and conservation activities).

The guidelines provide a detailed description of the assessment process and the key criteria to be met. A series of open-ended questions was provided to allow applicants to self-assess against the criteria. The key themes within the questions related to delivery of land/sea management outcomes, employment, social and cultural benefits and increase in the capacity of individuals and organisations.

Northern Territory Aboriginal Ranger Groups were invited to apply for funding in response to publicly available guidelines. Four funding rounds occurred across the 4-year program with capital items available for funding during rounds one and two while project funding was available across all four rounds.

Reviewers Assessment of Guidelines

The program guidelines were found to be easily accessible and written in plain language. The aims of the program were clearly stated and were presented in a way that allowed applicants to self-assess their proposals prior to submission. The quantity and diversity of the applications received indicate that applicants understood the focus and intent of the program.

The guidelines allowed for a diverse range of projects and encouraged creativity from applicants. While this was identified by some ranger groups as initially being a challenge when compared with highly prescriptive funding programs the freedom to focus on what was relevant to their group was appreciated.

The innovation theme presented an opportunity for groups to self-identify the activities and projects that they would seek funding for. This resulted in diversity within the applications that included presenting ideas that had not been eligible under other funding initiatives.

Linking outputs to outcomes and describing how this would be achieved in the application varied although all funded applications that were reviewed provided sufficient and appropriate detail. Additional guidance to applicants around 'what is an output and what is an outcome?' may be beneficial although, the high level of staff turnover within the Aboriginal Ranger Groups could negate this benefit.

All of the identified programs within the application were delivered through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. Multiple projects delivered on more than one of the programs and contributed to capacity building within the ranger organisations.

Stakeholder Feedback on Guidelines

During the stakeholder consultation no issues or problems were identified with the guidelines. While, in some instances a considerable time had passed since the guidelines had been read prior to making an application people couldn't recall any major difficulties in understanding the program or the eligible activities. The accessibility to Departmental staff was cited by multiple individuals as being helpful and making understanding and responding to the guidelines much easier.

It was a good idea to do open guidelines in the first round and it gave us the opportunity to see what groups were wanting. As a new program this was important and showed what people (in the Ranger Groups) were thinking.

Open guidelines can sometimes be tricky, but we found these ones ok to work with. Enterprise development and developing fee for service is something that we need to do, and we were able to fit that into this program.

Application Process

Application Description

The application process required Ranger Groups to enter information about their organisation, the funding they were seeking and the benefit that it would create. Anticipated outputs and outcomes were also required within the application process. The project/program/activity supported was also detailed by the applicant with the opportunity to identify the key program areas from the guidelines that would be addressed.

Within the application form organisations were required to identify how they would maintain equipment and its capacity for ongoing use. The application did not distinguish between different values of equipment or identify the level of detail that was required.

When applying to the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program organisations needed to identify if any training, licensing, accreditation or certification would be required for the use of capital or project funding. Applicants also needed to declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

The project funding stream required Ranger Groups to identify the specific outputs and outcomes that would be achieved, and these were the dominant consideration in the application process. For successful applications the milestones and subsequent payments were directly linked to the outputs.

The application process that was used for the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program was modified during the program. While initially applications were made through an electronic form (editable PDF, then Word document) which was emailed to the Department latter rounds utilised an NT Government wide online portal that automated many of the processes associated with entering organisation data and administrative details. The online portal also prompted applicants to enter all necessary responses in order to be able to submit.

Reviewers Assessment of Applications Process

The application process for the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program was assessed as being appropriate for the size and value of the program. The level of detail that was entered into the application was not onerous on the Aboriginal Ranger Groups who submitted applications. The high number of applications received, 193 over the life of the program indicates that groups were able to navigate the process well.

The modifications to the submission process were well received by the stakeholders and were described positively during consultations. The ease of use and the retention of previous applications were identified as positive aspects of the system. Some respondents identified problems with the initial sign in to the GrantsNT portal. This was usually associated with former employees of their organisation having previously registered but log in details not being retained. In each instance the issues were quickly resolved by Departmental officers.

During the consultations stakeholder's stated that they didn't have a detailed understanding of the assessment process. This was not a concern to the people interviewed and throughout the review no issues were raised at inappropriate projects or capital items being funded. The transparency of the program and the governance arrangements were cited by multiple individuals as their reason for confidence in the processes even with little understanding of it.

Stakeholder Feedback on Application Process

Stakeholders were generally positive about the application process aside from minor issues associated with entering information into the initial forms. Some respondents acknowledged that the application process was designed for the program and wasn't adapted from other government programs as this had been a negative experience when applying for other types of funding.

We take a risk management approach to the applications that we develop, needs to be a connection with land management outcomes. This process was a good one and didn't cause any problems.

The online application system is really good tool, and it is great finding previous applications and is a great resource.

We don't know much about the application process but didn't have any problems getting our application in. [THE DEPARTMENT OFFICER] would get back to us if there was an issue.



Assessment Process

A rigorous, 3-stage assessment process reduced the risk of project failure. The first stage of assessment involved checking for compliance with the guidelines and ensuring that all mandatory conditions were met. The second stage of assessment was review by a 3-6 member expert review group. The panel used an agreed assessment framework that ranked all applications. The third stage was for the expert panels assessment to be provided to the 12 member Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group (ALMAG) who provided the final recommendation to the Department Delegate.

The first stage of the assessment process was completed internally by the Program Director. The high volume of applications (193) required considerable effort and time to compile the applications. As early round applications were made through information being entered into a template that was then submitted by email none of the compliance checks beyond word count were automated. This was later rectified through an online application portal that has automated processes and prevents applications from being submitted without critical details being entered.

The second stage of assessment by the expert panel utilised a conventional, predetermined framework that ranked applications against established criteria. Following the initial assessment an additional criterion was added that allowed assessors identify projects that *should or shouldn't* be funded. This was through an additional *wildcard* scoring criterion that was provided to each application and was allowed to be independent of the other rankings.

While a subjective measure, the *wildcard* ranking was an opportunity for the expert panel to recommend or give weighting to ideas that were novel or new but may not have been funded through a traditional approach. This ultimately provided a mechanism for innovation and provided meaningful recommendations to the Department in a transparent and logical way that could be incorporated into funding decisions.

The third stage of assessment was the consideration of the applications by the ALMAG along with the rankings and recommendations provided by the expert panel. The 12-member ALMAG had representatives from all major stakeholders in the Northern Territory Land Management sector (as described in previous section Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group).

While the multi-step assessment approach required significant resourcing to establish it provided an effective and efficient method for the transparent assessment of applications. The Department was able to receive considered and meaningful input into the recommendation process whilst not devolving the decision-making process.

Reviewers findings on Assessment Process

The assessment process for applications is transparent and comprehensive giving stakeholder's confidence that the identified aims in the program guidelines are being achieved. The multiple stages of the assessment process work well together and are strengthened by the contributors being able to objectively rank applications using established frameworks.

The expert review group's critical assessment of the applications provides confidence to the Department and the ALMAG about the merits of proposed capital purchases or project activities. The established practice of identifying potential problems or challenges and flagging these for discussion with the applicants is a fair and practical approach to growing the capacity of Aboriginal Ranger Groups.

The diversity of skills and knowledge of the 12 member ALMAG resulted in robust recommendations being provided to the Departments Chief Executive as the delegate for making funding decisions. This was demonstrated in the minutes of the ALMAG meetings where detailed questions and points of clarification of funding applications are raised.

While the assessment process has multiple steps the success of the approach was demonstrated through the widespread success and support of the grants that were made. During the consultation process stakeholders were supportive of funding that was distributed which were often direct competition to their organisation. The strong cohesion between the Department, ALMAG and stakeholders was observed to be based on respect and the fairness of the program including the grant assessment process.

Stakeholder Feedback on Assessment Process

Stakeholders were satisfied with the assessment process and the feedback that they received on applications. Some of the Aboriginal Ranger Group's that were consulted with said they had made unsuccessful applications, but they still regarded the process as fair.

The ALMAG was happy to do an assessment and send it back. We'd make request for additional information which strengthened the process for everyone involved and showed the benefit of having so many Aboriginal land management experts involved.

Early assessments were tricky and needed a lot of work to get the process right. There was a lot of support for the expert group and ALMAG to get it all working right.



Contracting and Reporting

The 4-year program provided organizations with \$11,408,788.09 through 105 individual grants. Individual funding agreements were established with organisations for each successful application. The agreement utilised content directly from the funding application stating outputs and outcomes for milestones that were linked to payments. Reporting schedules were also included within the agreements.

Reporting templates were provided to groups for 6-monthly progress reports and a final report at the completion of the project. The level of detail required within the reporting was appropriate for the value of the grants supplied. Milestones detailing 2-4 deliverables were included within the template and organisations were required to provide a brief description of how this had been met.

The reports collected necessary data to demonstrate that the capital items purchased were being used and that projects were being conducted as described within the funding agreement. All reports required an officeholder to declare that funding had been spent in accordance with the agreement and the intent of the program.

The opportunity to simplify the reporting process through the increased use of geo-referenced photographs and simple captions or descriptions is under consideration by the Department. The need to provide training to grant recipients to ensure comprehensive records of project work are captured was also identified prior to any implementation of a new reporting system.

The introduction of the online reporting system through GrantsNT (online portal) will simplify the administration of reporting. Amongst the Aboriginal Ranger Group's there was widespread exposure to online funding and reporting tools. The move to GrantsNT is unlikely to present any major problems for grant recipients.

Reviewers findings on Contracting and Reporting

The contracting process was deemed appropriate for program and was carried out in a timely way following applications being approved. The milestones that were included within the funding agreements were realistic and achievable by the Aboriginal Ranger Groups and were consistent with the aims of the program. The reporting template allowed for clear assessments to be made on if projects had met the milestones and were going to or had achieved the intended outcomes.

The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program wasn't requiring groups to report peripheral information that was not directly relevant to the agreement. Some stakeholders expressed frustration at having to do this for funding received from other sources and described it as being a major barrier to applying for funds.

One stakeholder said they were happy with the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program reporting. They then provided a contrast through describing a different funding source that required extensive reporting that likely cost the organisation more in administration than the total value of the grant received.

The reporting on capital item purchases and projects was completed for most grants within the agreed time. In some instances, there was the need for Departmental officers to reach out to some grant recipient organisations to request overdue reports were completed. This was usually associated with the changing of personnel within the Aboriginal Ranger organisation and a breakdown of reporting processes.

Increasing the use of geo-referenced photographs within the reporting would likely increase the timeliness and detail provided by grant recipients. This may also offer the opportunity to use the images collected more broadly to promote the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. Establishing a protocol around the collection, ownership, cultural authority and use of images would be necessary before this type of reporting could be implemented.

Stakeholder Feedback on Contracting and Reporting

Stakeholders were generally happy with the contracting and reporting processes of the program and didn't identify any major issues. The increasing use of online systems was regarded as positive and was seen as a way to reduce the administrative burden on Aboriginal Ranger organisations.

We have no major issues with the program. It has less red tape around it, great reporting process.

Reporting process hasn't been too bad.

Funding a calendar year could be more effective, would generate better reporting.

Handover reports, acquittal reports online could be beneficial.

Reporting has been pretty easy. The first ones were over scoped. Biodiversity has to be impacted.

[NT Aboriginal] Ranger grants have the balance about right. Admin. is pretty straight forward for application and reporting.



Projects and Funding

Across the 4-year program The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program a total of 58 Capital grants were made distributing \$4.05m (average \$156,427 and median \$100,090). 47 project grants made distributing \$7.35m (average \$69,944 and median \$77,273). The number of applications and total funding provided is shown in Figure 3 and Table 2.

During round 1 there were 126 applications for funding with more than 2/3rd seeking capital funding. Nearly \$14.5 million was sought by the applicants which represented more than the total budget for the entire 4-year program. A total of 51 applications were successful in the first round with \$6.4 million committed.

The success of Grant Round 1 was higher than anticipated and included multi-year projects. While this was over half of the total program funding success applications included multi-year projects that would receive money in both year two and year three. This resulted in Grant Round 3 only funding a single project.

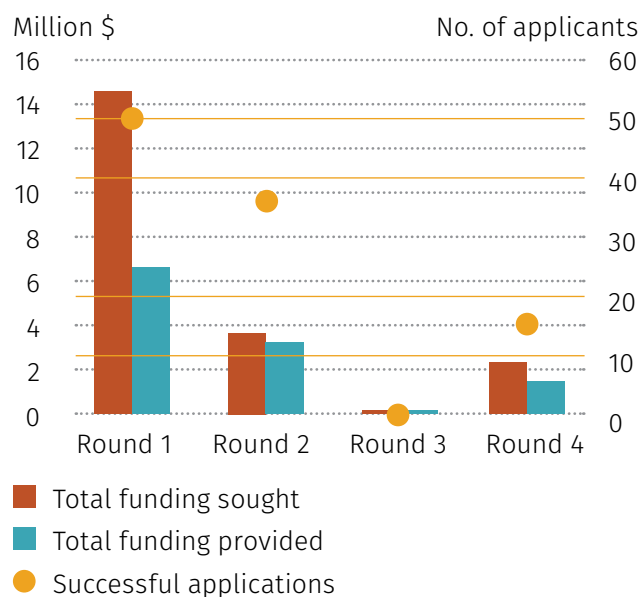


Figure 3: The total funding sought through applications was \$20.5m with over \$14m applied for in the first round of funding. The actual amount of funding provided, and the total number of applications is also shown (secondary axis).

The high number of applications received in the Round 1 of the program indicate strong awareness amongst NT Aboriginal Ranger groups of the grants program. The lower number of applications received for subsequent funding rounds can be attributed to the department communicating to stakeholders the size of the available funding pool and the absence of a capital grants program in funding Round 3 and 4.

As expected, all stakeholders said they would appreciate increased funding across the sector. There was strong recognition of the realistic expectations provided by the Department of the chances of being successful with the NT Ranger Grant Program. This then allowed Aboriginal Ranger Groups to make an assessment on whether it was worth investing the time and effort in preparing an application.

Table 2: Summary of the applications received, funding requested and successful applications by funding round.

Year	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total
No. of Project applications	38	11	1	25	75
No. of Capital applications	88	30	N/A	N/A	118
Project Funds requested	\$8,634,832	1,670,953	\$172,377	2,299,162	\$12,777,324
Capital Funds requested	\$5,849,879	1,962,346	N/A	N/A	\$7,812,225
Successful Project applications	22	8	1	16	47
Successful Capital applications	29	29	N/A	N/A	58
Project Funding committed	\$4,460,324	\$1,281,353	\$172,377	\$1,438,003	\$7,352,057
Capital Funding provided	\$2,141,935	\$1,914,796	N/A	N/A	\$4,056,731
Total Funding committed	\$6,602,259	\$3,196,149	\$172,377	\$1,438,003	\$11,408,788
Cumulative Funding committed	\$6,602,259	\$9,798,408	\$9,970,785	\$11,408,788	



Capital Grants

There was high diversity of capital items purchased using the grant funding although all contributed to land management outcomes. Items included the direct purchase of vehicles (primarily heavy duty 4WD Utes) and All Terrain Vehicles (ATV). A range of spray equipment was also purchased for applying chemical to weed infestations.

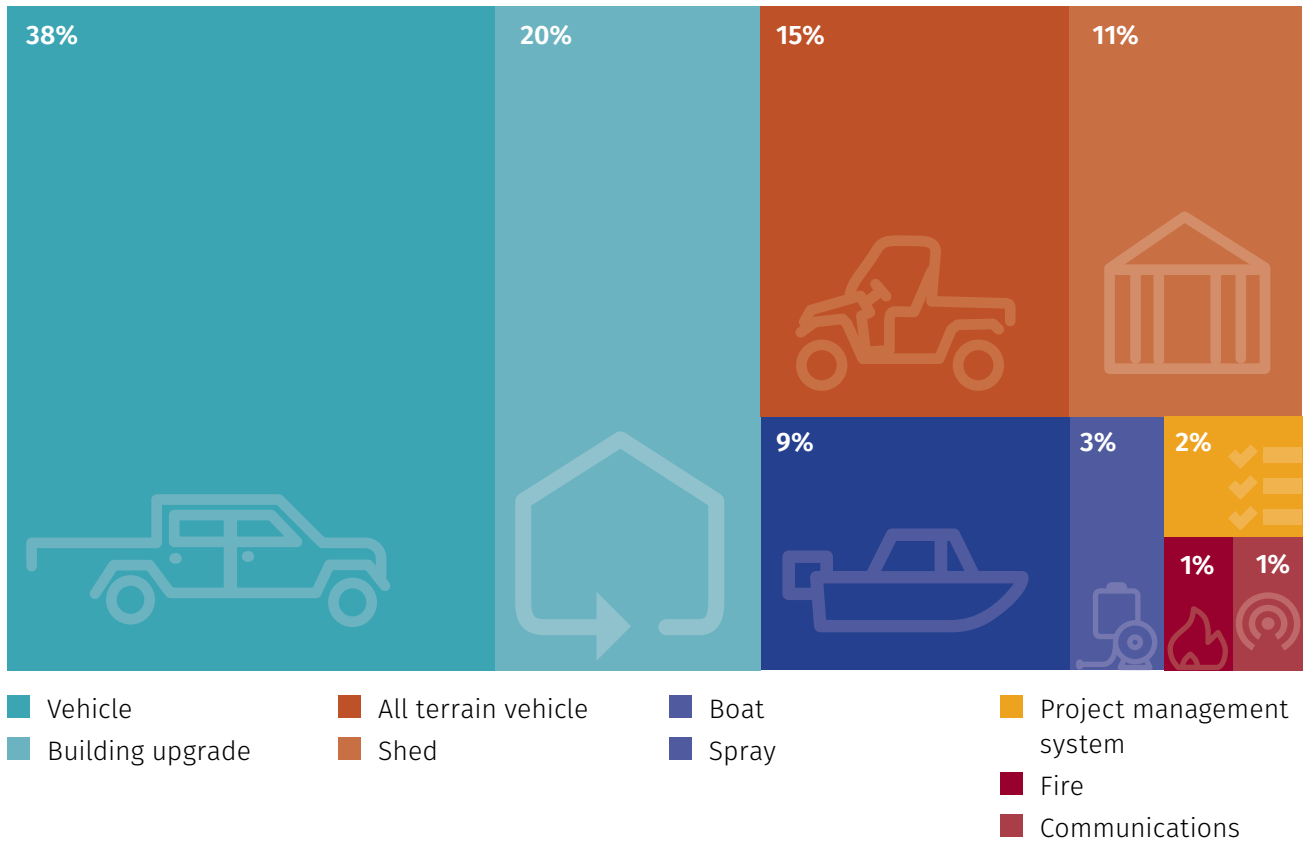


Figure 4: Capital funding grants distribution. The figure represents 100% of grants provided with the size of each rectangle indicating the number of grants investing in each activity.

In some instances, grants were used to develop or improve ranger stations and work bases. Providing power systems or ablution blocks in these locations has allowed for more sustained operations in areas that were previously only visited on an infrequent basis which is inconsistent with sound land management practices.

The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program also contributed to the purchase of four boats and a new motor for an existing vessel. The guidelines provided flexibility within the funding that allowed for the capital grant to be used as a contribution towards larger vessels or the customisation of existing vessels. This was identified by ranger groups as an important component of the program as there were no other funding streams available for these purchases.

Ranger groups interviewed during this evaluation have reported that capital items provided acted as seed funding that has allowed the scaling up of fee for service work that is now generating more than \$200,000 per year and providing employment for 8-12 rangers on a seasonal basis.

Project Funding

The projects funded through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program met the identified need of land management, weed control and wildlife management and awareness. Projects that also recognised that cultural practice and land management are intrinsically linked were also funded. Cultural management projects included activities associated with preserving rock art, identifying cultural sites and developing processes for maintaining knowledge of these places in an appropriate way.

Funding was also provided to innovative projects that didn't easily fit within the traditional 'fire, weeds and ferals' activities of land management. The innovation was fostered through broad, non-prescriptive guidelines allowing for diverse applications. Departmental officers and assessment team's practical experience and understanding of locations and types of activities undertaken by ranger groups was critical in providing suitable resources.

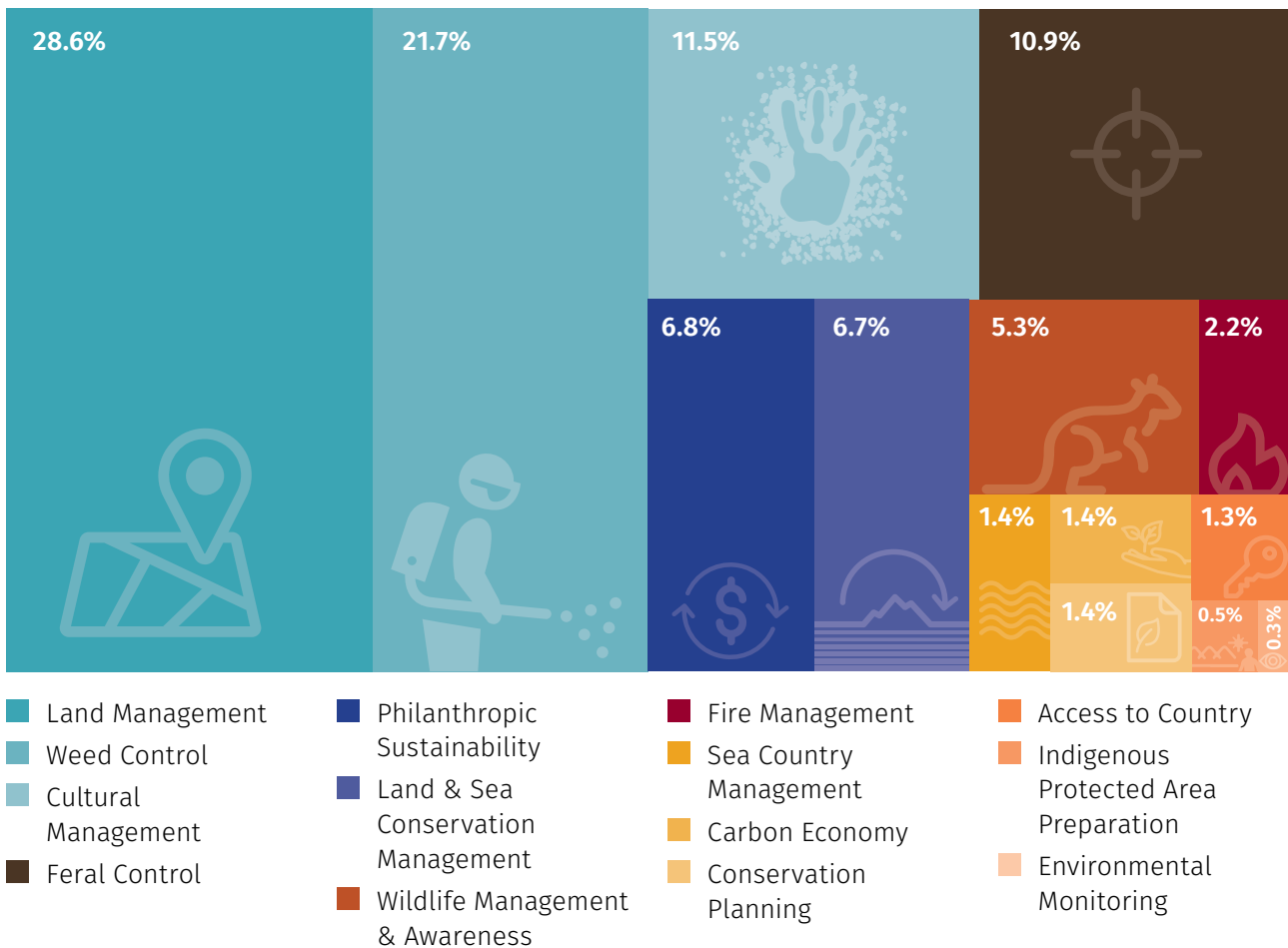


Figure 5: Total number of projects classified by key activities. The figure represents 100% of the projects with the size of the rectangle represents the number of projects within a category.

Examples of this included the investigation models for engaging philanthropic organisations in NT Aboriginal Ranger Programs. This multi-year project represented a significant investment and was recognised as being very different to the other works funded.

Project funding was also used by NT Aboriginal Ranger Groups to invest modest investment of less than \$40,000 allowed another ranger group to undertake a study that acted as a pre-cursor to establishing an Indigenous Protected Area. This will attract ongoing federal funding of \$350,000-\$400,000 annually.

Another project was funded to provide an 'Indigenous State of the Region' that will provide insight into the state of Aboriginal Land Management across the Northern Territory. While again not traditional weeds, fire and ferals the project was identified as having a high likelihood of success and will generate a resource that will help inform Aboriginal Land Management on a broad scale within the Northern Territory.

Reviewers findings on Projects and Funding

Through the consultation process the NT Ranger Grant Program was positively described by two groups as *'gap-filler'*. This concept was expressed throughout the face-to-face consultations and was described as the project funding and capital items addressing a critical need and providing the resources to do something that was far beyond the financial value of the grant. Multiple groups reported that the purchase of scientific equipment (field/ocean monitoring devices) had been the catalyst for establishing or growing links with Universities and other research institutions.

The flexibility of the program allowed this to be for the outright purchase of vessels or a contribution towards larger vessels with a value higher than the funding cap. These purchases were described by the ranger teams involved as transformative investments.

This was through multiple benefits including improved safety when visiting remote areas, capacity to apply for fee for service work and increased profile for the rangers within the community. Many rangers have now achieved or are on a pathway to commercial coxswain licensing that would be unlikely to have been achieved without the boat purchases.

Importantly, this allowed the ranger groups to be equal partners in research and also focus the work on critical questions relevant to the management of country and the preservation of culture. Additionally, a sense of pride was described in being able to do the work and contribute data to Territory and national scale projects.

The practical experience and knowledge of Northern Territory Government staff administering the program has been a major contributor to the success of the program and had influence over many components. This understanding reduced the requirements and workloads on ranger groups to justify higher purchase prices for equipment. Lowering this barrier to submitting an application was identified by many stakeholders as a practical solution. On the ground this meant heavy duty 4-wheel drive vehicles that can sustain ongoing use on rough dirt roads when loaded with heavy spray rigs and other equipment.

The profile of ranger groups also increased, and they were more easily identifiable within the community when working with new vehicles, boats and all-terrain vehicles. Importantly, this was a catalyst for other people in the community to want to engage with the ranger groups and find out more. This included new individuals being recruited to the program and in other instances people returning to ranger programs after external employment.

Respondents identified many benefits that were additional to the land management and financial outcomes. Improved well-being and the feeling of doing something that is worthwhile and beneficial to the community was regularly mentioned by rangers and ranger coordinators. This included citing the excitement and enthusiasm of staff to *'get out and use the new equipment'* and the sense of pride that came with having *'proper equipment to work with'*.

Stakeholder Feedback on Projects and Funding

Stakeholders were generally satisfied with the types of projects approved and the funding provided through the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. Unsurprisingly some groups identified 'more money' as being something they would like to see. This was contrasted by other respondents from smaller organisations who felt bigger projects with more funding might place too much strain on their management and staff.

Within the consultation stakeholders were asked directly "If the NT Ranger Grant Program continued, how would you feel if stayed the same without any changes?". All respondents indicated that they would be happy with this and saw no need for major changes.

The boat has been empowering, everyone wants to go out in the boat.

Practical and on the ground and keeping things simple is important.

The earlier grants have been a great basis for future work.

Its pretty good, one area that is a bit dicey is around training. It's underfunded in the whole sector. Feds [Federal Government] maybe should be picking up the funding.

The vehicle and spray rig contracts have allowed the group to put in for more contracts. Other commercial contracts were using the old rig that had problems.



Evaluative Judgement of Program

The NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has been successfully delivered resulting in improved land management across the Northern Territory. These benefits have been realised on both Aboriginal owned land, through direct activity and on non-Aboriginal land through increased capacity and resources for fee for service work.

The unique design of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has fostered collaboration between the Northern Territory Government, Land Councils and a diverse group of Aboriginal land management organisations. This has been achieved by creating clearly identified program objectives and then consulting with relevant stakeholders to ensure that they are appropriate, suitable and achievable.

Multiple stakeholders used terms like meaningful, respectful and engaged to describe their interactions with the Northern Territory Government staff administering the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program.

The governance structure for the Program was comprehensive requiring a significant investment to establish, although once operational proved to be an efficient mechanism for reviewing guidelines, applications and reports. While creating a broad group of stakeholders who were involved in the program the Northern Territory Government did not cede or devolve any decision-making processes.

The volunteer Aboriginal Land Management Advisory Group provided invaluable advice to the program and could offer intense focus on the program and the applications received. Coupled with the experience of the Northern Territory Government Departmental staff critical assessment and feedback was provided to Aboriginal Ranger Groups and contributed to an extremely low failure rate amongst the grants provided.

The key recommendations that have been provided with this report address the issues identified through the review although all would provide additional benefit to the program as opposed to addressing critical flaws or major issues. Consistently the reviewers found that stakeholders were happy with the program and that they were satisfied with what had been achieved. These findings were validated through reviewing the reporting provided by organisations that received grants.

The flexibility of the program to provide organisations with the resources they need was fundamental in achieving the reported outcomes. Essentially this recognised that each Aboriginal Ranger Group is unique with varied aspirations and community goals. While similarities may exist in the land estate which they are looking after self-determination of the resources and projects that would be pursued led to the identified real land and sea country management outcomes.

Increasing the awareness of the NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program across the Northern Territory represents an opportunity to strengthen the program and celebrate its successes. Awareness of the factors that have contributed to this program's achievements should also be understood in order to be protected and maintained.

Attachment 1

Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form: Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program Evaluation



Date:	September 2020 – November 2020
Full project title:	Consultancy – Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program – Independent Review of Program Outcomes
Principal Evaluators:	<i>Ninti One</i> – Andy Bubb, Lead Evaluator <i>Ninti One</i> – Tammy Abbott, Senior Research Officer

We would like your help to understand your experiences with the Northern Territory Government Department of Environment and Natural Resources Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program. The Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program has been running since 2017 and has provided money to ranger groups across the Northern Territory for the purchase of capital items and to run projects. We are interested to hear how this program has contributed to ‘real land management outcomes’ across the Northern Territory. We are inviting you to participate in this project because your organisation has received a grant under the program and has been nominated by Northern Territory Government to be consulted with.

What is this evaluation about?

This evaluation will be used by the Northern Territory Government to understand what has worked well within the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program and what areas could be improved. The key review questions we will base this analysis on will be:

- Are the principles and guidelines appropriate?
- Is the application process suitable for size and scale of the funding?
- Is the assessment framework appropriate?
- Are funding agreements fit for purpose?
- Is the reporting suitable for the funding provided?

What does taking part in this Evaluation involve?

Contributing to this evaluation will involve a semi-structured interview with the principal evaluators Andy Bubb and Tammy Abbott who work for Ninti One. Ninti One is an Aboriginal owned business, that acknowledges the six core values of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- Reciprocity
- Respect
- Equality
- Responsibility
- Survival and protection
- Spirit and integrity.

If you are happy to participate, we will organise to visit you during October or November 2020. The interviews should take no longer than an hour for individuals or 2-3 hours for groups. We would like to audio record the meetings so we don't miss anything, but participants will not be identified. If you do not wish to be recorded please let us know.

Do I have to be a part of this evaluation?

No, you do not have to take part.

If you want to be a part of this project, please sign the attached Consent Form. The evaluation team will go through this with you and answer any questions or concerns that you might have. You can also talk to your family and friends about this study if you want them to help you decide whether or not to participate.

You can keep this Participant Information Sheet, and the project team will collect the signed consent form. You can change your mind about taking part at any time by contacting the evaluation team. Any information collected before you choose to withdraw (including audio recordings) will still be included.

What happens with the information collected?

Any information we collect from you will be confidential. Only the evaluation team will be able to see your information. All information will be stored securely by Ninti One using password protection. The information we collect will be reported, published and presented to The Northern Territory Government Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The reports will include the name of organisations that have participated in the evaluation but individuals will not be identified.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part, we cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits directly from this evaluation; but you will be helping to provide feedback on the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

We do not expect that there are any risks or disadvantages related to you participating in this project.

How do I hear about the evaluation results?

At the end of the evaluation, you will be provided a one-page summary of the findings.

If you have any questions about this evaluation, please contact:

Andy Bubb – 0417 557 268 (andy@andybubb.com)

Tammy Abbott – 0437 312 134 (tammy.abbott@nintione.com.au)

If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this evaluation, please contact:

Keith Saalfeld

Director, Aboriginal Ranger Grant program

Flora and Fauna Division, Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security

Northern Territory Government

564 Vanderlin Drive, Berrimah or PO Box 496, Palmerston, NT 0831

P: +61 8 8995 5039 M: +61 447 830 097

E: keith.saalfeld@nt.gov.au

**CONSENT FORM: NT Aboriginal Ranger Grant
Program Stakeholders**



Name of Evaluation:

Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program – Independent
Review of Program Outcomes

Participant details:

Name:

(in block letters)

I hereby agree to take part in the above evaluation.

- The details of the evaluation have been explained to me, and
- I have got a copy of the Participant Information Sheet, and
- I understand that my information collected by the principal evaluators will be used as part of this evaluation, and
- Any questions I have asked regarding this evaluation have been answered.

I know that I can stop being a part of this evaluation whenever I want. I understand meetings/interviews will be audio recorded.

I agree that my information may be used in a report, on the condition that my name or any other identifying information is not used.

I understand that any information I provide will be strictly confidential.

Signature of participant

.....

(Signature)

(Date)

Witnessed by

.....

(Print name)

(Signature)

(Date)

